

VZCZCXR05507

RR RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHCH #0290 1001447  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 101447Z APR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY CHISINAU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7865  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHISINAU 000290

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/UMB, DRL/AE

E.O. 12958: Declassify 04/09/19

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM PINR MD

SUBJECT: SPEAKER LUPU DISINFORMS AMBASSADOR ABOUT  
NGO VOTE COUNT SUPPORTING COMMUNISTS

REFS: A. Chisinau 0288 B. Chisinau 0287

Classified by Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry under  
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a public pull-aside, Moldovan Parliament Speaker Marian Lupu informed Ambassador Chaudhry that Coalition 2009, Moldova's election-watching NGO coalition, had its own vote figures, which agreed with Central Election Commission (CEC) figures showing a win for the Party of Communists (PCRM) in April 5 parliamentary elections. Lupu expressed his concerns that someone was pressuring Coalition 2009 to destroy its court records, and thus render it unable to support PCRM claims. However, a Coalition 2009 spokesman gave a completely different account of PCRM vote-rigging and pre-electoral violations. End summary.

¶2. (C) After conducting an April 9 tour for ambassadors of the Parliament building that was burnt out and vandalized in April 7 riots, Lupu pulled Ambassador Chaudhry aside in front of the other Ambassadors, and whispered his message: Coalition 2009, a consortium of NGOs set up to watch and report on the campaign and April 5 parliamentary voting, had figures which agreed with those of the CEC. CEC figures, still unofficial, showed the PCRM with about 50 percent of the vote, and either 60 or 61 seats in the 101-seat unicameral Parliament. (Note: 61 votes are needed to elect the next president; all other seats have been captured by three opposition parties who have vowed not to cooperate with the PCRM. End note.) Still whispering, Lupu expressed his worries that someone was urging Coalition 2009 to destroy its records, and thus deprive it of the opportunity to support the CEC figures and the PCRM win.

¶3. (C) To check these claims, we called Coalition 2009 Executive Director Igor Botan, and asked a general question about his assessment of the election, without raising the question of Coalition 2009's knowledge of vote figures. Botan replied by repeating the Coalition's April 7 press conference statement that the election was "incorrect and partially free." To support his argument, he cited two methods used by the PCRM to rig the election: thousands of addenda to ID cards (which allowed voters to present an unstamped ID to election officials in another of Moldova's 1,997 precincts, and vote again), and multiple voters listed at one address, to the occasional surprise of a voter who checked the list and noted unknown persons living at his or her address.

14. (C) Botan continued to criticize the PCRM, citing the bias of mass media and the misuse of administrative resources by the PCRM. "People were brainwashed by government media. Also, think what some poor peasant thinks when the President shows up in his district, and pensions are paid on April 1." In response to a question about any group holding independent vote counts or estimates, Botan replied that the role of Coalition 2009 was only to provide information on and monitor voting procedures, and monitor mass media.

Comment

-----

15. (C) At no time did Botan hint that he had any facts or figures that would support CEC vote figures and a PCRM victory. In fact, all his responses were negative, revealing a strong disparity between what Lupu claimed, and what Coalition 2009 asserted. (We do not know whether the coalition actually does have vote numbers, if only the raw numbers of those counted at all polling stations by observers from an NGO affiliated with Coalition 2009.) We cannot judge whether Lupu is deliberately misinforming us or engaging in wishful thinking, but in either case he was far from the truth.

Chaudhry